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JUVENAL'S TENTH SATIRE
AND
JOHNSON'S THE VANITY
OF HUMAN WISHES

Juvenalis, Decimus Junius

Juvenal's Tenth Satire

&

Johnson's The Vanity of Human Wishes

With Introductions and Notes

by

E. H. BLAKENEY, M.A.

Winchester College

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*This little Book is
Inscribed to
Michael George Glazebrook, D.D.
Canon of Ely
with Gratitude and Affection.*

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PREFATORY NOTE

Classical masters have, I suppose, sometimes felt the need of a book to be taken ‘pari passu’ with the usual Latin authors read in schools. Such a book must be short; it must be worth reading as a piece of literature; and it should be complete in itself—not a mere collection of elegant extracts. Juvenal’s Tenth Satire seems to answer the purpose.

In writing the notes—which I have tried to make concise—I have had before me the monumental commentary of Mayor, J. D. Lewis’s sensible volumes, and Mr. J. D. Duff’s model edition. The text is based partly on Bücheler’s recension, partly on Housman’s.

Along with Juvenal’s Satire has been printed Johnson’s fine adaptation, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. The two pieces—so alike, yet, in some ways, so different—are well worth studying together. I have to thank my friend and colleague, Mr. R. L. A. du Pontet, for kindly overhauling the proof-sheets.

E. H. B.

January, 1925.

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Juvenal's Tenth Satire

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Juvenal (*Decimus Junius Juvenalis*), the greatest of Roman satirists and one of the most notable writers in the ‘Silver Age’, was born at Aquinum somewhere about the middle of the first century A.D. We know very little indeed of his life, and such biographies as have come down to us must be accepted with caution; but it may well be that they are correct in telling us that he was the son of a rich freedman, that he early devoted himself to rhetoric—more for pleasure than for profit—and served in the army. An inscription of the time of Domitian says he became tribune of the first Dalmatian cohort. Apparently he served in Britain on the staff of Agricola. He lived to the age of eighty, dying in banishment, his exile being due to some writing of his which had offended the Emperor Hadrian.

We possess sixteen satires by him, published in five books at various times. The Tenth Satire is assigned by some to the year 120 or thereabouts; this would mean that he published it when he was quite an old man. It may be so; but the vigour and brilliance of “this magnificent satire”, as Saintsbury terms it, suggest that, if published late, it was written at an earlier

period—possibly in the opening years of Trajan's principate, when the poet was between fifty and fifty-five.

"He paints in vivid and dark colours, often with revolting realism, the social vices of the age. He was not concerned to give a true picture of his times. Their value for us lies in the accessory parts of the pictures. They enable us to realize life and manners at Rome under Domitian, Trajan, and Hadrian", writes Bury (*Hist. Roman Empire*, p. 476). His early training in rhetorical composition left an indelible mark on all he wrote. He loved to lay the colours on thick. Not but what the vices of the age were enormous, as readers of Tacitus and Suetonius know only too well. But Juvenal gives us, in his biting satire, a picture of society unrelieved by any redeeming features; all is lurid and dark. But no one ever wrote satire with greater power and with a fiercer intensity of purpose. Moreover, under all his declamation and diatribe lay a solid substratum of truth. *Facit indignatio versum.*

The late Sir Samuel Dill, in one of the best 'appreciations' of Juvenal ever written,¹ sums up in these words: "After all the deductions of scrupulous criticism, the profound moral sense of Juvenal has laid bare and painted with a realistic power, hardly equalled even by Tacitus, an unhealthy temper in the upper classes, which was full of peril. He has also revealed, alongside of this decline, a great social change, we may even call it a crisis, which the historian is apt to ignore. The decay in the morale and wealth of the Senatorial order, together with

¹ *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, Book I, Chap. 2.

the growing power of a new moneyed class, the rise to opulence of the freedman and the petty trader, the invasion of Greek and Oriental influences, and the perilous or hopeful emancipation (especially of women) from old Roman conventionality—these are the great facts in the social history of the first century which, under all his rhetoric, stand out clearly to the eye of the careful student.” If some of the satires betray a note of truculence, together with a certain querulousness and disappointment, it is not so in the Tenth Satire. Here, to use Merivale’s words (*Hist. of Romans*, Vol. VIII, Chap. 64), “Juvenal is no longer the mere assailant of vice, still less is he a murmur against fortune; he seeks to exalt virtue, to expound the true dignity of human nature, to show to man the proper objects of ambition, to vindicate the goodness and justice of Providence”.

In his power of trenchant expression Juvenal rivals Tacitus. Some of his phrases have obtained world-currency; they are even more familiar than all but the best-known lines of Horace and Virgil. “The fine passage at the end of the Tenth Satire, where he points out what it is permitted mankind to pray for, has something in it which combines the lofty ardour of Lucretius with the subtle psychological insight of Horace, and to readers of all ages has been, as it still remains, a powerful influence over conduct”.¹

¹ J. W. Mackail, *Latin Literature*, p. 224. It may be remarked that Juvenal expressed the more merciful tendencies of his age: see the beautiful lines in xv, 131–142. The Terror was then at an end; Hadrian was “lord of the ascendant”.

Juvenal has often been dubbed ‘pessimist’. It is easy for facile optimists to stigmatize as ‘pessimism’ a ruthless and resolute facing of facts in their naked ugliness. If that is, indeed, pessimism, Juvenal was a pessimist: not otherwise. The truth is Juvenal “*had* an ideal, even the moral law, and was strong in faith that at the last all will confess ‘No God is either deaf or a Teiresias’” (Mayor, Preface to the 1886 edition of his *Juvenal*).

There is, of course, another side to this estimate of Juvenal; and the rebutting case has been put forward in a formidable criticism by Gaston Boissier. Professor Tyrrell, in his volume of essays on Latin poetry, appears to agree when he says: “It is hard to resist the feeling that there are many passages [in Juvenal] which betray a desire to dwell on impure topics, rather than to show up the ugliness of vice”. Certainly it is unfortunate that the lash of his criticism was applied mainly to the dead; if he satirizes the living, they are either obscure and therefore not formidable, or, if powerful once, were now displaced. The attack on dead emperors was not dangerous when Juvenal published his satires,—which is merely another way of saying that he was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made. But, after making necessary deductions, we need not suspect him of dishonesty of purpose; even in his most declamatory passages, when his violence is leading him into obvious exaggeration, an underlying earnestness of purpose is still manifest. And it is noticeable that, as time went on, the tone of his satires became more elevated, even if there is a

falling off in literary style. Of that style *at its best* little need be said. Its impressiveness, its brevity, its compressed power, have always been acknowledged and admired. He could flash out epigrammatic phrases with unequalled skill, and these have stuck fast in the memory of mankind. His pictures of real life have an astonishing truthfulness about them, though the shadows are often too dark and the lights too glaring. Faults he had—of style, of temper, of outlook—no doubt. But let us, while frankly acknowledging this, never forget his virtues, for they were real ones. The object of his work was not to use satire in the service of comedy, but as an instrument to scourge the follies, the furies, and the brutalities of his time. The world has long since agreed to believe that what he set out to do he accomplished; and—*securus judicat orbis terrarum.*

For a brief but suggestive criticism of Juvenal, see Saintsbury, *History of Criticism*, Vol. I.

ARGUMENT OF THE TENTH SATIRE OF JUVENAL

Men pray for all sorts of things—eloquence, strength, riches—and in so doing court disaster for themselves. Is it surprising that Democritus and Heracleitus found matter, the one for merriment, the other for sadness, in “the doubtful doom of humankind”—this vain search after imagined blessings? For what then are we to pray? Mark the issues of ambition: Sejanus, Crassus, Pompey, Cæsar—all came to an untimely end. The schoolboy hankers after the eloquence of great orators like Cicero and Demosthenes; yet what was the result in the case of these two eminent men? Far better had they remained unknown, and therefore unenvied. Consider the soldier’s glory—how brief and passing a thing it is, as we see by the lives of Hannibal and of Xerxes; even Alexander the Great, who sighed for new worlds to conquer, had to be, at the last, content with “two paces of the vilest earth”. Length of years does not bring happiness, but the reverse: “whom the gods love die young”. Take Priam, Nestor, Mithridates, and the rest. They were spared long, to finish their course to their own sorrow. Others pray for beauty—a dangerous thing at best; look at the case of poor Silius.

*“God answers sharp and sudden on some prayers,
And thrusts the thing we have prayed for in our face,
A gauntlet with a gift in it.”*

No: the gods know what is best; let them arrange things as they only can do; so will your lot be happiest. Pray, not for glory or wealth, or long life, or beauty, but for the simplest of things—a sound mind in a sound body.

SATIRA X

OMNIBUS in terris quae sunt a Gadibus usque
Auroram et Gangen, pauci dignoscere possunt
Vera bona atque illis multum diversa, remota
Erroris nebula. Quid enim ratione timemus
Aut cupimus? quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te 5
Conatus non poeniteat votique peracti?
Evertere domos totas optantibus ipsis
Di faciles; nocitura toga, nocitura petuntur
Militia; torrens dicendi copia multis
Et sua mortifera est facundia; viribus ille 10
Confisus perit admirandisque lacertis.

Sed plures nimia congesta pecunia cura
Strangulat, et cuncta exsuperans patrimonia census
Quanto delphinis balaena Britannica major.
Temporibus diris igitur jussuque Neronis 15
Longinum et magnos Senecae praedivitis hortos
Clausit, et egregias Lateranorum obsidet aedes
Tota cohors: rarus venit in coenacula miles.
Pauca licet portes argenti vascula puri,
Nocte iter ingressus, gladium contumque timebis 20

Et motae ad lunam trepidabis arundinis umbram:
 Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.

Prima fere vota et cunctis notissima templis
 Divitiae, crescant ut opes, ut maxima toto
 Nostra sit arca foro. Sed nulla aconita bibuntur 25
 Fictilibus: tunc illa time, cum pocula sumes
 Gemmata et lato Setinum ardebit in auro.

Jamne igitur laudas, quod de sapientibus alter
 Ridebat quoties de limine moverat unum
 Protuleratque pedem, flebat contrarius auctor? 30
 Sed facilis cuivis rigidi censura cachinni:
 Mirandum est unde ille oculis sufficerit humor.
 Perpetuo risu pulmonem agitare solebat
 Democritus, quanquam non essent urbibus illis
 Praetextae, trabeae, fasces, lectica, tribunal. 35
 Quid si vidisset Praetorem curribus altis
 Exstantem, et medio sublimem in pulvere Circi,
 In tunica Jovis, et pictae Sarrana ferentem
 Ex humeris aulaea togae, magnaenque coronae
 Tantum orbem quanto cervix non sufficit ulla? 40
 Quippe tenet sudans hanc publicus et, sibi Consul
 Ne placeat, curru servus portatur eodem.
 Da nunc et volucrem sceptro quae surgit eburno,
 Illinc cornicines, hinc praecedentia longi
 Agminis officia, et niveos ad frena Quirites, 45
 Defossa in loculis quos sportula fecit amicos.
 Tum quoque materiam risus invenit ad omnes
 Occursus hominum, cuius prudentia monstrat

Summos posse viros et magna exempla datus
 Vervecum in patria crassoque sub aere nasci. 50
 Ridebat curas nec non et gaudia vulgi,
 Interdum et lacrimas, cum Fortunae ipse minaci
 Mandaret laqueum mediumque ostenderet un-
 guem.

Ergo supervacua aut vel perniciosa putentur,
 Propter quae fas est genua incerare deorum? 55
 Quosdam praecipitat subjecta potentia magnae
 Invidiae; mergit longa atque insignis honorum
 Pagina; descendunt statuae restemque sequuntur.
 Ipsas deinde rotas bigarum impacta securis
 Caedit, et immeritis franguntur crura caballis. 60
 Jam stridunt ignes, jam follibus atque caminis
 Ardet adoratum populo caput, et crepat ingens
 Sejanus: deinde ex facie toto orbe secunda
 Fiunt urceoli, pelves, sartago, matellae.
 Pone domi tauros, duc in Capitolia magnum 65
 Cretatumque bovem: Sejanus ducitur unco
 Spectandus: gaudent omnes. "Quae labra! quis illi
 Vultus erat! nunquam, si quid mihi credis, amavi
 Hunc hominem; sed quo cecidit sub criminis?
 quisnam

Delator? quibus indicibus, quo teste probavit?" 70
 "Nil horum: verbosa et grandis epistola venit
 A Capreis." "Bene habet; nil plus interrogo. Sed
 quid

Turba Remi?" Sequitur fortunam ut semper, et odit

Damnatos. Idem populus, si Nortia Tusco
 Favisset, si oppressa foret secura senectus 75
 Principis, hac ipsa Sejanum diceret hora
 Augustum. Jam pridem, ex quo suffragia nulli
 Vendimus, effudit curas. Nam qui dabat olim
 Imperium, fasces, legiones, omnia, nunc se
 Continet atque duas tantum res anxius optat— 80
 Panem et Circenses. “Perituros audio multos.”
 “Nil dubium: magna est fornacula.” “Pallidulus
 mi

Brutidius meus ad Martis fuit obvius aram.
 Quam timeo victus ne poenas exigat Ajax,
 Ut male defensus! Curramus praecipites, et 85
 Dum jacet in ripa calcemus Caesaris hostem.
 Sed videant servi, ne quis neget et pavidum in jus
 Cervice obstricta dominum trahat.” Hi sermones
 Tunc de Sejano, secreta haec murmura vulgi.
 Visne salutari sicut Sejanus? habere 90
 Tantundem, atque illi summas donare curules,
 Illum exercitibus praeponere? tutor haberi
 Principis angusta Caprearum in rupe sedentis
 Cum grege Chaldaeo? Vis certe pila, cohortes,
 Egregios equites et castra domestica. Quidni 95
 Haec cupias? et qui nolunt occidere quemquam
 Posse volunt. Sed quae praeclera et prospera tanti
 Ut rebus laetis par sit mensura malorum?
 Hujus qui trahitur praetextam sumere mavis,
 An Fidenarum Gabiorumque esse potestas 100

Et de mensura jus dicere, vasa minora
 Frangere, pannosus vacuis aedilis Ulubris?
 Ergo quid optandum foret, ignorasse fateris
 Sejanum; nam qui nimios optabat honores
 Et nimias poscebat opes, numerosa parabat 105
 Excelsae turris tabulata, unde altior esset
 Casus et impulsae p^raeceps immane ruinae.
 Quid Crassos, quid Pompeios evertit, et illum
 Ad sua qui domitos deduxit flagra Quirites?
 Summus nempe locus nulla non arte petitus, 110
 Magnaque numinibus vota exaudita malignis.
 Ad generum Cereris sine caede ac vulnere pauci
 Descendunt reges et sicca morte tyranni.

Eloquium ac famam Demosthenis aut Ciceronis
 Incipit optare et totis Quinquatribus optat, 115
 Quisquis adhuc uno parcam colit asse Minervam,
 Quem sequitur custos angustae vernula capsae.
 Eloquio sed uterque perit orator; utrumque
 Largus et exundans leto dedit ingenii fons.
 Ingenio manus est et cervix caesa; nec unquam 120
 Sanguine causidici maduerunt rostra pusilli.
 “O fortunatam natam me Consule Romam!”
 Antoni gladios potuit contemnere, si sic
 Omnia dixisset. Ridenda poemata malo
 Quam te conspicuae, divina Philippica, famae, 125
 Volveris a prima quae proxima. Saevus et illum
 Exitus eripuit, quem mirabantur Athenae
 Torrentem et pleni moderantem frena theatri.

Dis ille adversis genitus fatoque sinistro,
 Quem pater, ardentis massae fuligine lippus, 130
 A carbone et forcipibus gladiosque parante
 Incude et luteo Vulcano ad rhetora misit.

Bellorum exuviae—truncis affixa tropaeis
 Lorica, et fracta de casside buccula pendens,
 Et curtum temone jugum, victaeque triremis 135
 Aplustre, et summo tristis captivus in arcu—
 Humanis majora bonis creduntur: ad hoc se
 Romanus Graiusque ac barbarus induperator
 Erexit; causas discriminis atque laboris
 Inde habuit. Tanto major famae sitis est quam 140
 Virtutis. Quis enim virtutem amplectitur ipsam,
 Praemia si tollas? Patriam tamen obruit olim
 Gloria paucorum, et laudis titulique cupido
 Haesuri saxis cinerum custodibus, ad quae
 Discutienda valent sterilis mala robora fici, 145
 Quandoquidem data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulcris.

Expende Hannibalem: quot libras in duce summo
 Invenies? hic est quem non capit Africa Mauro
 Percussa Oceano Niloque admota tepenti, 149
 Rursus ad Aethiopum populos altosque elephantos.
 Additur imperiis Hispania; Pyrenaeum
 Transilit. Opposuit natura Alpemque nivemque:
 Diducit scopulos et montem rumpit aceto.
 Jam tenet Italiam; tamen ultra pergere tendit.
 “Actum,” inquit, “nihil est, nisi Poeno milite
 portas” 155

Frangimus et media vexillum pono Suburra."
 O qualis facies et quali digna tabella,
 Cum Gaetula ducem portaret bellua luscum!
 Exitus ergo quis est? O gloria! vincitur idem
 Nempe et in exsilium praeceps fugit atque ibi
 magnus

160

Mirandusque cliens sedet ad praetoria regis,
 Donec Bithyno libeat vigilare tyranno.
 Finem animae quae res humanas miscuit olim
 Non gladii, non saxa dabunt, nec tela; sed ille
 Cannarum vindex et tanti sanguinis ulti—
 Annulus. I, demens, et saevas curre per Alpes,
 Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias.

165

Unus Pellaeo juveni non sufficit orbis;
 Aestuat infelix angusto limite mundi,
 Ut Gyari clausus scopulis parvaque Seriphos.
 Cum tamen a figulis munitam intraverit urbem,
 Sarcophago contentus erit. Mors sola fatetur
 Quantula sint hominum corpuscula. Creditur
 olim

170

Velificatus Athos, et quidquid Graecia mendax
 Audet in historia; constratum classibus isdem
 Suppositumque rotis solidum mare credimus, altos
 Defecisse amnes epotaque flumina Medo
 Prandente, et madidis cantat quae Sostratus alis.
 Ille tamen qualis rediit Salamine relicta,
 In Corum atque Eurum solitus saevire flagellis
 Barbarus, Aeolio nunquam hoc in carcere passos,

175

180

Ipsum compedibus qui vinixerat Ennosigaeum?
 (Mitius id sane quod non et stigmate dignum
 Credidit. Huic quisquam nollet servire deorum?)
 Sed qualis rediit? nempe una nave, cruentis 185
 Fluctibus, ac tarda per densa cadavera prora.
 Has toties optata exegit gloria poenas!

“Da spatum vitae, multos da, Juppiter, annos!”
 Hoc recto vultu solum, hoc et pallidus optas.
 Sed quam continuis et quantis longa senectus 190
 Plena malis! Deformem et teturum ante omnia
 vultum

Dissimilemque sui, deformem pro cute pellem
 Pendentesque genas et tales aspice rugas,
 Quales, umbriferos ubi pandit Tabraca saltus,
 In vetula scalpit jam mater simia bucca. 195

Plurima sunt juvenum discrimina: pulcrior ille
 Hoc, atque ore alio; multum hic robustior illo:
 Una senum facies, cum voce trementia membra
 Et jam leve caput madidique infantia nisi.

Frangendus misero gingiva panis inermi: 200
 Usque adeo gravis uxori natisque sibique
 Ut captatori moveat fastidia Cocco.

Non eadem vini atque cibi torpente palato
 Gaudia. 204

Aspice partis

Nunc damnum alterius: nam quae cantante volup-
 tas, 210

Sit licet eximus citharoedus sive Seleucus,

Et quibus aurata mos est fulgere lacerna?
 Quid refert magni sedeat qua parte theatri,
 Qui vix cornicines exaudiet atque tubarum
 Concentus? clamore opus est ut sentiat auris 215
 Quem dicat venisse puer, quot nuntiet horas.
 Praeterea minimus gelido jam in corpore sanguis
 Febre calet sola; circumsilit agmine facto
 Morborum omne genus; quorum si nomina quaeras,
 Promptius expediam quot amaverit Hippia moechos,
 Quot Themison aegros autumno occiderit uno, 221
 Quot Basilus socios, quot circumscriperit Hirrus;
 Percurram citius quot villas possideat nunc 225
 Quo tondente gravis juveni mihi barba sonabat.
 Ille humero, hic lumbis, hic coxa debilis; ambos
 Perdidit ille oculos et luscis invidet; hujus
 Pallida labra cibum accipiunt digitis alienis.
 Ipse ad conspectum coenae diducere rictum 230
 Suetus hiat tantum, ceu pullus hirundinis ad quem
 Ore volat pleno mater jejuna. Sed omni
 Membrorum damno pejor dementia, quae nec
 Nomina servorum, nec vultum agnoscit amici
 Cum quo praeterita coenavit nocte, nec illos 235
 Quos genuit, quos eduxit. Nam codice saevo
 Heredes vetat esse suos; bona tota feruntur
 Ad Phialen: tantum artificis valet halitus oris.
 Ut vigeant sensus animi, ducenda tamen sunt 240
 Funera natorum, rogus aspiciendus amatae
 Conjugis et fratri plenaque sororibus urnae.

- Haec data poena diu viventibus, ut renovata
 Semper clade domus multis in luctibus inque
 Perpetuo moerore et nigra veste senescant. 245
- Rex Pylius, magno si quidquam credis Homero,
 Exemplum vitae fuit a cornice secundae. ^{cum}
- Felix nimirum, qui tot per secula mortem
 Distulit atque suos jam dextra computat annos 249
- Quique novum toties mustum bibit. Oro parumper
 Attendas quantum de legibus ipse queratur
- Fatorum et nimio de stamine, cum videt acris
 Antilochi barbam ardentem, cum quaerit ab omni,
 Quisquis adest socius, cur haec in tempora duret,
 Quod facinus dignum tam longo admiserit aevo? 255
- Haec eadem Peleus, raptum cum luget Achillem,
 Atque alias, cui fas Ithacum lugere natantem.
- Incolumi Troja Priamus venisset ad umbras
 Assaraci, magnis solemnibus, Hectore funus
 Portante ac reliquis fratum cervicibus inter 260
- Iliadum lacrimas, ut primos edere planctus
 Cassandra inciperet scissaque Polyxena palla,
 Si foret exstinctus diverso tempore, quo non
 Cooperat audaces Paris aedificare carinas.
- Longa dies igitur quid contulit? omnia vidit
 Eversa et flammis Asiam ferroque cadentem.
 Tunc miles tremulus posita tulit arma tiara
 Et ruit ante aram summi Jovis, ut vetulus bos,
 Qui domini cultris tenue et miserabile collum
 Praebet, ab ingrato jam fastiditus aratro. 270

Exitus ille utcunque hominis; sed torva canino
Latravit rictu quae post hunc vixerat uxor.

Festino ad nostros et regem transeo Ponti
Et Croesum, quem vox justi facunda Solonis
Respicere ad longae jussit spatia ultima vitae. 275

Exsilium et carcer Minturnarumque paludes
Et mendicatus victa Carthagine panis
Hinc causas habuere. Quid illo cive tulisset
Natura in terris, quid Roma beatius unquam,

Si circumducto captivorum agmine et omni
Bellorum pompa animam exhalasset opimam,
Cum de Teutonico vellet descendere curru?

Provida Pompeio dederat Campania febres
Optandas; sed multae urbes et publica vota
Vicerunt. Igitur Fortuna ipsius et Urbis 285

Servatum victo caput abstulit. Hoc cruciatu
Lentulus, hac poena caruit, ceciditque Cethagus
Integer, et jacuit Catilina cadavere toto.

Formam optat modico pueris, majore puellis
Murmure, cum Veneris fanum videt anxia mater, 290
Usque ad delicias votorum. "Cur tamen," inquit,
"Corripias? Pulcra gaudet Latona Diana."

Sed vetat optari faciem Lucretia qualem
Ipsa habuit: cuperet Rutilae Virginia gibbum
Accipere atque suam Rutilae dare. Filius autem 295
Corporis egregii miseros trepidosque parentes
Semper habet. Rara est adeo concordia formae
Atque pudicitiae. Sanctos licet horrida mores

Tradiderit domus ac veteres imitata Sabinos,
 Praeterea castum ingenium vultumque modesto 300
 Sanguine ferventem tribuat natura benigna
 Larga manu: (quid enim puero conferre potest plus
 Custode et cura natura potentior omni?)
 Non licet esse viro; nam prodiga corruptoris
 Improbitas ipsos audet tentare parentes: 305
 Tanta in muneribus fiducia!
 I nunc et juvenis specie laetare tui, quem 310
 Majora exspectant discrimina: fiet adulter
 Publicus, et poenas metuet, quascunque maritis
 Iratis debet¹: nec erit felicior astro
 Martis, ut in laqueos nunquam incidat. Exigit
 autem
 Interdum ille dolor plus quam lex ulla dolori 315
 Concessit. Necat hic ferro, secat ille cruentis
 Verberibus.
 “Sed casto quid forma nocet?” Quid profuit immo
 Hippolyto grave propositum? quid Bellerophonti?
 Erubuit nempe haec ceu fastidita repulsa, 326
 Nec Stheneboea minus quam Cressa excanduit,
 et se
 Concussere ambae. Mulier saevissima tunc est
 Cum stimulus odio pudor admoveat. Elige quidnam
 Suadendum esse putas cui nubere Caesaris uxor 330
 Destinat. Optimus hic et formosissimus idem
 Gentis patriciae rapitur miser extinguendus

¹ Exigere irati est (H. A. J. Munro), reading in l. 312 mariti.

Messallinae oculis: dudum sedet illa parato
 Flammeolo, Tyriusque palam genialis in hortis
 Sternitur, et ritu decies centena dabuntur 335
 Antiquo; veniet cum signatoribus auspex.
 Haec tu secreta et paucis commissa putabas?
 Non nisi legitime vult nubere. Quid placeat dic:
 Ni parere velis pereundum erit ante lucernas;
 Si scelus admittas dabitur mora parvula, dum res 340
 Nota Urbi et populo contingat Principis aurem.
 Dedecus ille domus sciет ultimus: interea tu
 Obsequere imperio, si tanti vita dierum
 Paucorum. Quidquid melius leviusque putaris, 344
 Praebenda est gladio pulcra haec et candida cervix.

Nil ergo optabunt homines? Si consilium vis,
 Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus quid
 Conveniat nobis rebusque sit utile nostris.
 Nam pro jucundis aptissima quaeque dabunt di;
 Carior est illis homo quam sibi. Nos animorum 350
 Impulsu et caeca vanaque cupidine ducti
 Conjugium petimus partumque uxoris; at illis
 Notum qui pueri qualisque futura sit uxor.
 Ut tamen et poscas aliquid voveasque sacellis
 Exta et candiduli divina tomacula porci, 355
 Orandum est ut sit MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO.
 Fortem posce animum, mortis terrore carentem,
 Qui spatium vitae extremum inter munera ponat
 Naturae, qui ferre queat quoscunque labores,
 Nesciat irasci, cupiat nihil, et potiores 360

Herculis aerumnas credat saevosque labores
Et Venere et coenis et pluma Sardanapali.
Monstro quod ipse tibi possis dare: semita certe
Tranquillae per virtutem patet unica vitae.
Nullum numen abest¹ si sit Prudentia: nos te, 365
Nos facimus, Fortuna, deam caeloque locamus.

¹ Some edd. read 'habes' (i.e. 'thou, O Fortune, hast'). For 'sit' Heinrich prefers 'adsit'.

NOTES

Line 1. **Gadibus**, Cadiz, the extreme west, as the Ganges was the extreme east of the world as known in antiquity. Cf. Johnson's 'from China to Peru'.

3. *illis* (dative) *multum diversa* = *mala*. Cf. Chaucer, *Troilus*, iv, § 29.

'O Juvenal, lord! soth is thy sentence:
That litel witen folk what is to yerne
That they ne finde in hir desir offence;
For cloude of errorre lat hem not discerne
What best is.'

4. *ratione, on principle* ($\delta\pi\theta\omega\varsigma$). Used adverbially.

5. *tam dextro pede, so auspiciously*. So in Virgil (*Aen.* x, 255) the goddess is begged to come auspiciously—'adsis pede, diva, secundo' (=omine prospero).

7. *ipsis* = dominis. Cf. these lines (translated from the Greek Anthology) which breathe the spirit of true prayer:

'The good, unasked, in mercy grant;
The ill, tho' asked, deny'.

Seneca has the same thought, expressed more than once in his Letters.

8. *toga, viz. in peace time*.

9-10. *torrents (torrent-like) . . . facundia*: Demosthenes and Cicero are cases in point.

ille, Milo of Crotona, the famous athlete. See *Class. Dict.*

11. *periit*. Note the lengthening of the final vowel.
13. *strangulat*: ‘Virtue is choked with foul ambition’ (Shakespeare).
14. *cuncta patrimonia* = *all other wealth* (not necessarily inherited). For *census* (*income*) cf. Hor., *Odes*, II, xv, 13.
16. *Longinum* = *Longini aedes*. Longinus, the jurist, was banished; Seneca (Nero’s tutor) and Lateranus both suffered death.
17. *obsidet*: the present tense pictures the scene as if actually going on.
18. *coenacula, cocklofts*. The poor man in his garret was safe from the attentions of the police (*miles*): ‘*praedam civilibus armis Scit non esse casas*’, as Lucan says.
19. *pauca* = only a few (cf. l. 2); *puri*, plain, unembossed. The position of these two words shows that they are emphatic.
20. *nocte*: night journeys were common among the Romans.
21. *ad lunam, πρὸς τὴν σελήνην*, *in the moonlight*; *trepidabis*, an intrans. verb used transitively.
22. *cantabit*, a permissive future. Cf. Hor., *Odes*, I, vii, 1; Virg., *Aen.* vi, 848.
- vacuus*, i.e. with nothing in his hand or on his person. Cf. Jerome, *Life of Hilarion*, ‘*nudus latrones non timet*’, and the Greek proverb *οὐδεὶς ἀδικεῖ πένητας*. Chaucer, *Boethius*, Bk. II, prose 5 (ad fin.).
- 23-5. *fere*, as a general rule; *foro*, the abode of bankers, who kept their clients’ strong-boxes there.
26. *tunc*, emphatic, as in l. 328. *illa* = *aconita (poison)*.
27. *Setinum*, an expensive wine, grown in Campania.
- 28-30. *Jam*, viz. now that we see the vanity of human wishes. The laughing philosopher was Democritus of Abdēra; the weeping philosopher, Heraclitus of Ephesus.

Cf. Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Vol. III, 397 (ed. Shilleto).

30. *auctor, teacher*, as in Hor., *Odes*, I, xxviii, 14-15.

32. *ille*: others read *illi* (= Heracleito).

33-5. *quanquam*, here with subj., as always in Juvenal, and often in other writers of the Silver Age.

illis, Abdera, Ephesus, and the rest of the cities in D.'s day. The words in 35 all imply 'insignia' of rank.

36 sq. A description of the *pompa* (procession) at the Circensian Games. *Praetorem*: not in its later sense, but in its original sense of 'leader in the field' (*prae + ire*).

38. *Jovis*: the tunic was borrowed for the occasion from the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. The embroidered toga worn by the praetor is called *Tyrian hangings* (*Sarrana aulaea*) in mockery of their size and shape. Sarra, the old name of Tyre (= Assyrian 'Surru').

39. *coronae*: the jewelled crown was held by a slave riding in the chariot with the praetor. We are told that the slave's business was to whisper to his lord: 'respice post te; hominem memento te'. This was done to appease Nemesis, whose anger was evoked by *ὕψης*, or Pride. The dangers of arrogance loomed large in the eyes of antiquity: Adam, *Religious Teachers of Greece*, p. 126; cf. the stories of Croesus and Polycrates.

41. *quippe* not infrequently = enim. *sudans*, rhetorical exaggeration. *sibi ne placeat*, viz. to guard against self-satisfaction, *αὐταρπέσκεια*. 'Public' slaves served the magistrates in various offices.

43. *da nunc, mark now.*

45. *officia* = *clientes* (retainers), who escorted the great man in the procession. So 'spectacula' = spectators, 'servitia' = slaves, 'potestas' = magistrate, 'custodia' = prisoner (Seneca). Abstract for concrete. *niveos*, in their white togas.

46. *sportula*, the gratuity (paid at the time of their morning call on the patronus).

47. **tum quoque**, even in those days. **Quoque** = *etiam* is a regular Silver use.

invenit, sc. Democritus.

50. **nasci**: join with **posse**. Abdera was proverbial for the stupidity of its inhabitants (hence the word *vervecum*); yet it was the birthplace of Protagoras, Hecataeus, and Leucippus. Cicero (*de Nat. Deor.*, ii, § 42), speaks of the dullness of folk ‘qui utantur crasso coelo atque concreto’.

51-3. **nec non et**: pleonastic; **mandaret laqueum**, viz. bade her go hang; **medium unguem**, a gesture of contempt.

55. **fas est**: cf. *infr. 257*. Transl. ‘it is right’, ‘it is allowable’, or ‘it is our privilege’. A faint sneer.

incrare: a prayer was written on a waxed tablet and placed on the knees of the idol. Cf. Homer’s *ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούναις κεῖται*.

56-8. **subjecta, exposed**. **Pagina**: the ‘cursus honorum’, giving a man’s title to fame, would be inscribed on the base of his statue. Translate: ‘some are wrecked by the long and stately roll of their own dignities’. The destruction, by an infuriated (and probably idiot) mob, of statues once reared to popular heroes, has again and again occurred in history, e.g. in Russia after the Red Revolution of 1917. This passage in Juvenal should be read in connection with Ben Jonson’s fine play *Sejanus*.

59. **impacta securis**, *blows of the ax*.

60. Cf. Ben Jonson: ‘And the legs | Of the poor horses, that deserved nought, | Let them be broken, too!’

63. **Sejanus**, the all-powerful minister of Tiberius. He was executed for treachery, A.D. 31.

secunda, second to one only, viz. the Emperor.

64. The statue was of bronze. **matellae**, *ἀμιλδες*.

65. **lauros**, as though for a wedding.

66. **cretatum**, said tauntingly. The victim was, as befitted the occasion, white; but any spot or blemish must be, says

Juvenal, 'pipe-clayed'. *ducitur, ἀπάγεται.* The corpses of executed criminals were dragged away from the prison and then exposed ('spectandus'), before being cast into the Tiber.

67. Two citizens are represented as holding a conversation.

70. *delator, informer.* These professional informers were the scourge of Rome at this period. Money rewards followed a successful prosecution by one of these scoundrels: see Dill, *Roman Society*, chap. i. Put down by the good emperors, they were encouraged by the bad. *probavit, proved his case.*

72. Tiberius was living in seclusion at Capri during that time. The letter was read publicly before the Senate. *bene habet = καλῶς έχει* = 'very well'.

73. *Turba Remi*, viz. the Roman populace.

74. *Nortia*, the Etruscan goddess of Fortune. *Tusco: Sejanus* was born in Etruria. 'If the goddess of Etruria had favoured her son.'

75-6. *si . . . principis*, i.e. if the old Emperor had been caught napping (*secura* = off his guard). For *senectus pr.* = *senex princeps* cf. Hor., *Odes*, III, xxi, 11, 12, *prisci Catonis virtus*, 'wise old Cato'; Milton, 'the might of Gabriel fought' (=mighty G.).

77. *ex quo vendimus . . .* = *ever since we left off selling our votes.* 'Vendimus', ironically for 'damus'. Electioneering bribery was rampant during the latter days of Republican Rome.

78. *effudit*, sc. *populus*. This word seems like a fragment of political slang which we have adopted in colloquial English = have 'chucked': Greek *ἀναχαρτίσειν*. The people had now ceased to care. Their sole interests were 'panem et circenses' (Anglicè 'the dole and cup-tie matches')—'plebs sordida et circo ac theatris sueta', said Tacitus with grim truth.

80. *se continet*, viz. its old field of political activity is closed.

81. *multos*, the former friends and supporters of Sejanus.

82. *fornacula* = *fornax*; *mi* = *mihi*. The sense is: 'There's a hot time at hand for some'. Diminutives (*fornacula*, *pal-*

lidulus, and cf. l. 173), common in early and popular Latin, but deliberately neglected by the Augustans, were affected by Silver Age writers.

83. Brutidius, a well-known orator. **Ajax** = Tiberius. For the story of Ajax and his frenzy, see *Class. Dict.* The meaning here is: 'I fear we are to have a repetition of conquered Ajax in the old legend—a blind indiscriminate massacre'.

86. **in ripa**, sc. Tiberis. See on 66.

87. **in jus** = *into court*.

90-1. **salutari**, i.e. greeted at your morning levée. Cf. J. B. Bury, *Roman Empire*, p. 595. **illi . . . illum** = *one man . . . another man*. **curules**, i.e. sellas.

94. **grege Chaldaeo**, the astrologers. Suetonius says of Tiberius that he was 'circa deos negligentior, quippe addic-tus mathematicae ('astrology')'. See the remarkable chapters in Tacitus (*Ann.*, VI, 21, 22). It is a curious fact that, as a sound and manly religion decays, there springs up a crop of superstitious cults and freak faiths (e.g., in our own day, the Holy Rollers, Christian Scientists, and Mormons have large followings).

94-5. **pila**, &c., executive power (of the guard that escorted him). **cohortes**, the Praetorian Guard.

castra domestica: a personal bodyguard (such as Sejanus had).

96. **et** = *etiam* ('even'). Unfortunately, as Shakespeare says:

'How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Make deeds ill done!'

97-8. 'What success is not too dearly bought if it has to be set off by a corresponding measure of suffering?' **ut** = *on condition that*, following on **tanti** = *worth having*.¹

99. **trahitur**, sc. *unco*: cf. 66.

100. Fidenae, Gabii, Ulubrae (all in Latium), proverbial

¹ Or 'worth paying such a high price, to wit that . . .' (*ut* being explanatory).

as more or less derelict places, like Sandwich or Winchelsea.

potestas. See *n.* on 45. Hence the Italian ‘podestà’.

101-2. The magistrate of a town like Ulubrae would find his chief employment in such ‘small beer’ as checking weights and measures, to prevent the ‘snub-nosed rogue’ of a country shopkeeper from cheating his clients. *pannosus:* no need to wear the formal toga (cf. our quondam ‘frock-coat and top hat’) in small country towns.

103. *optandum* = optabile.

105-6. *numerosa tabulata*, *the numerous storeys* (or stages). In class. Latin ‘numerous’ = rhythmical, melodious.

unde esset: final. For the sentiment cf. Hor., *Odes*, II, x, 11-12; Claudian, *In Rufin.*, I, 22-3, tolluntur in altum | Ut lapsu graviore ruant.

107. *praeceps*, a neuter noun.

108. The plurals mean ‘men *like* Crassus and Pompey’. *illum*, viz. Julius Caesar. Consult *Class. Dict.* for the fate of these three men.

110. *summus locus petitus* = summi loci petitio. *Nempe, why, to be sure.* Cf. ll. 160, 185, 326.

111. ‘Prayers for greatness, heard and answered’ (*exaudita*).

112-3. *generum Cereris*, Pluto. *sicca, bloodless.*

114. Eloquence was the ultimate aim of all Roman education. The belief that ‘eloquentia’ was the most splendid of human gifts was deeply rooted in the Roman mind—

‘Ce grand art des Romains, cette auguste science
D’embellir la raison, de forcer les esprits,—’

as Voltaire wrote (*Colson*, Introd. to *Quintilian*, I, p. xxviii).

115. *Quinquatribus*, the annual feast of Minerva, in March.

116-7. Every school-boy longs for eloquence. The ‘as’ (roughly a penny) was offered by the boy to Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, to make him wise (so Duff). The ‘custos’ carried the boy’s books to school. *adhuc* = *as yet*.

118. Demosthenes poisoned himself (cf. 125); Cicero had his head and hand cut off. Note the quantity—*perit*.

120. *ingenio*, dat. for genitive.

122. A quotation from one of Cicero's poems in praise of himself. Most of them are lost—deservedly so, if they at all resembled this braggart jingle. He was referring in this line to his action during the Catilinarian conspiracy. He never ceased to refer to it ever afterwards—as Mr. Nupkins never ceased to remind everyone of what he had done in the case of the Middlesex Dumpling and the Suffolk Bantam (*vide* the *Pickwick Papers*).

123. *potuit* = *might have* . . . (it was in his power). Cf. Cic., *Phil.* II, § 118.

126. i.e. the *second* of the Philippic orations. *volveris*, in the scroll.

128. *torrentem*: cf. 1. 9. *frena*, lit. *curb, bit*. Meetings of the Assembly were regularly held in the theatre (of Bacchus).

130-2. D.'s father was not a mere blacksmith, but a sword manufacturer (*gladios parante incude*, *the sword-forging anvil*). *Vulcano*, i.e. the forge. *rhetora*, viz. a teacher of rhetoric.

133 *sq.* Description of a 'trophy': Rich, *Dict.*, s.v. 'tropaeum'.

curtum t. j., i.e. a chariot-yoke shorn of its pole. *captivus*, carved in the stone. The arch of Titus (among others) is still standing in Rome.

137. *ad hoc* = *to this end* (military fame). *erexit se*, raised his hopes.

139. *causas* = motives. *inde*, viz. from trophies and such like 'toys'. We may remember Nelson's words off Cape St. Vincent: "Westminster Abbey or victory!"

141-2. *amplectitur . . . tollas*: note the mixed form of condition.

olim signifies (1) formerly; (2) some day; (3) at times (*ποτέ*): so here.

143. *gloria, ambition.*

tituli, an epitaph, inscription.

148. *non capit, οὐ χωρεῖ*, cannot contain. Cf. the lines on Drake (written over 300 years ago):

‘But for his fame the ocean sea
Was not sufficient room.’

So Philip said to Alexander the Great, *Μακεδονίᾳ σε οὐ χωρεῖ*. ‘And now two paces of the vilest earth | Is room enough’.

150. *rursus*, i.e. southwards. *altos*: modern edd. prefer *alios*; but its meaning does not seem clear.

151-2. *imperiis*, to the Empire of Carthage. The crossing of the Alps by Hannibal in his journey to Italy was one of the greatest exploits in antiquity. See Arnold’s *Second Punic War*.

153. *aceto*: Livy, xxi, 37. Polybius says nothing about the vinegar.

154. *tenet*, after Cannae.

156. *Suburra*, the most populous part of Rome, and the typical street of tradesmen.

157-9. *facies = sight.*

Gaetula bellua, an African elephant. *luscum*: Hannibal lost an eye during his marches in Italy. *vincitur*: at Zama, 202 B.C.

161-2. *sedet cliens*, waits, like a humble morning caller (*salutator*), at the court of Prusias, King of Bithynia, till His Majesty deign to wake (*vigilare*). Hannibal took poison, concealed in a ring ('annulus'), to avoid falling into the hands of the Romans, who had demanded his extradition.

163. *miscuit*. Cf. *Acts*, xvii, 7, *οἱ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀναστατώσαντες*.

167. *declamatio*, viz. the subject for a rhetorical essay.

168-70. Alexander the Great was born at Pella (in Macedonia). He is said to have sighed for more worlds to conquer.

Gyarus, *Seriphus*, two little islands in the Aegean, used as places of banishment (cf. St. Helena).

171. *urbem*, Babylon, the walls of which were built of brick.

173. *Quantula . . . corpuscula*: *n.* on l. 82. *Creditur olim* = *it has long been believed*; evidently Juvenal does not accept the story of the canal through the peninsula of Athos. It seems, however, that the work was completed and used.

174. *Graecia mendax*: true enough of Ctesias, Hellanicus, and similar 'historians'. But there is a good deal of 'lying' matter in Roman histories.

175 *sqq.* All these stories were stock themes in the rhetorical schools.

solidum, predicative; so that it became like the dry land. For the bridge of boats built by Xerxes over the Hellespont, and for the rivers 'drunk dry' by the Persian host (*Medo*), see *Herod.*, VII, 34-6 (with Macan's commentary). See Johnson, *Vanity*, 225 *sqq.*, and the note there.

178. *et quae* (like 'et quidquid' in l. 174) = *and what else*. *madi dis alis*, i.e. till he sweats again. *Sostratus*, an unknown poet.

179-82. *ille*, Xerxes. *qualis*, *in what a plight!* *solitus* = *qui solitus erat*. Herodotus says he scourged the Hellespont. Aeolus, the storm god, kept the winds imprisoned in a cavern: Virg., *Aen.* i, 52 *sq.*

Ennosigaeum, *ἐννοσίγαιον* (the Homeric epithet) = Neptune.

183-4. Kind of him (was it not?) to let him off a branding! *nollet*, said with bitter irony. *sane*, concessive: 'I grant you'.

185. *una*, rhetorical exaggeration. *nempe*: l. 110 (*n.*).

188 *sqq.* See Johnson, *Vanity*, 255-90.

189. 'Laetus et tristis vitam longam optas': scholiast. But it may well mean 'in youth and age alike'.

190 *sqq.* Contrast with this unfeeling and lop-sided treatment of 'old age' Cicero's remarks in his beautiful little treatise *de Senectute*, and the noble words in *Proverbs*, xvi, 31: 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness'; xx, 29: 'The beauty of old men is

the hoary head'. Pope—recollecting, perhaps, Terence's words in the *Phormio*, 'senectus ipsa morbus'—speaks of 'the sickness of long life, old age' (*Satires and Epistles*, II, 88). Anaxandrides (*flor.* fourth century B.C.) puts the matter in a finer light than Juvenal and the satirists could ever hope to do.

194. **Tabraca**, in Numidia.

195. Better join **jam** with **mater** = *a mother at (long) last*, because the females of anthropoid apes apparently do not bear till late in life.

196. **discrimina** = *differences*.

197. **multum**, in prose 'multo' (abl. of measure of difference).

200. **misero**, dat. of agent.

202. **captatori**: fortune hunters were a busy tribe in Rome. 'Vultur est, cadaver expectat.' "Captation," says Dill (*Roman Society*), "became a regular profession in a society where trade, industry, and even professional skill, were treated as degrading to men of gentle blood."

209. **partis** = *faculty* (of hearing). The old man can no longer enjoy a concert; to vocal and instrumental music he is deaf.

215-6. He cannot hear the name of a caller when the slave (*puer*) announces him, nor catch the time of day when it is called. The Romans used sundials (*solaria*) or water-clocks (*clepsydrae*) to mark the time. Becker's *Gallus*, sc. ii (excurs. 5); Rich, *Dict.*, s.vv.

220. **expediam** (fut. indic.), **quaeras** (pres. subj.): mixed condition, as in 340. Cf. Hor., *Odes*, III, iii, 7-8.

221. **Themison**: the name perhaps stands for any well-known physician.

autumno, the sickly season in Rome.

222. **socios** = partners. To cheat a partner in business was to incur 'infamia'.

226. **quo tondente**: a close-cropped beard was worn till the fortieth year; the chin was then shaved.

227. **debilis** properly = *maimed*)(*integer*. So Minucius: 'Vulcanus claudus deus et debilis'. Here = weak, ailing. (See J. E. B. Mayor, *The Latin Heptateuch*, p. 104.)

230. **diducere rictum**: cf. Hor., *Sat.*, I, x, 7, 'rictus' (ringi) is the drawing back of the lips so as to display the teeth.

232. **omni** = *any*. So in the older English writers; e.g. Latimer, 'the trade of monkery, which was without *all* devotion'; A.V. of *Heb.*, vii, 7, 'without *all* contradiction'; Ascham, *Scholemaster*, '[this] is without *all* reason'.

237. Order: 'vetat suos (his kith and kin) esse heredes'; that is, he disinherits them. The word **codex** has several meanings: (1) a trunk 'of a tree, (2) a book with leaves like our own books, (3) a will, (4) a code of laws. Here in sense (3): cf. our 'codicil'. For 'wills' in Roman life see the Cambridge *Companion to Latin Studies*, §§ 431 *sqq.*

240-2. **ut** = *although*. **funera natorum**: cf. Tennyson, *Demeter*,

‘To question why
The sons before the father die,
Not mine.’

sororibus = sororum cineribus. A ‘brachylogy’: so in 247, cornice.

243. **data, assigned. renovata, &c.**, 'stroke on stroke lightening upon their home' (Mayor).

246-7. Nestor, King of Pylus: see *Class. Dict.*, and Hom., *Il.*, I, 250. **cornice**=cornicis vita. Cf. Hor., *Odes*, III, xvii, 13, 'annosa cornix'; Tennyson, 'the many-wintered crow'.

249. Units and tens were counted on the left hand, hundreds on the right.

251-2. In Homer, Nestor merely *alludes* to his son's death. A remarkable parallel passage occurs in *Propert.*, iii, 4, 49-50:

‘Non ille Antilochi vidisset corpus humari,
Diceret aut, “O mors, cur mihi sera venis?”’

stamine, *the thread of life*.

253-4. *ardentem*, on the funeral pyre. *socius*: the antecedent in relative clause.

256-7. *eadem*, sc. *queritur*. *alius*, Laertes; *Ithacum*, Ulysses.

cui fas = whose fate it was. Cf. *Pers.*, i, 61. So in an old Latin hymn (the Last Day) ‘*Quo mortuos resurgere | vitaeque fas sit reddere (=redire)*’. *natantem, storm-tost at sea* (during his ten years’ wandering).

259-60. *funus, the bier*. *cervicibus*, abl. of place, ‘on their shoulders’.

261. *ut . . . inciperet*, ‘to leave Cassandra to begin’. For Assaracus (ancestor of Priam), Hector, Cassandra, and Polyxena (daughters of Priam), see *Class. Dict.*

265. *contulit*, sc. Priamo. *dies* is usually fem. when it means *time, date* (*constituta die* = on a fixed date). Never fem. in plural.

267-70. *ruit not rushed but fell*. *ab . . . aratro*: the inanimate object is almost personified; hence ‘*ab*’. *jam = at last*.

271. ‘*His death was anyhow (utcunque, an indefinite adverb) that of a human being: his unhappy queen was changed into a dog*’. *torva*, adj. for adverb = *fiercely*.

273. *regem*, Mithridates VI; see Mommsen, *Hist. Rome*, iv, 6-10; Croesus (sixth cent. B.C.). The story of Solon’s interview with Croesus is apocryphal (Bury, *Hist. Greece*, chap. vi). For the Croesus myth see Jebb’s *Bacchylides*, pp. 195 sq.

275. Cf. the Greek proverb *τέλος ὅπα βίον*, and *Ecclesiasticus*, xi, 28: ‘*Judge no man happy before his death*’.

276 sq. What befel Marius in exile. An oft-told tale. See Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Vol. III, p. 540.

278. *hinc, viz. from living too long*.

280-2. *pompa*, the triumphal procession to the Capitol. The -a of ‘*pompa*’ is unelided. *opimam*, victorious. Cf. the expression ‘*spolia opima*’. *vellet, ζειλλε*. Teutonicō: the allusion is to Marius’s crushing defeat of the Cimbri and Teutones in 102 B.C.

283-4. *provida, in her forethought.* optandas, he would have done wisely to pray for them. ‘O quam inimica nobis sunt vota nostrorum!’ (Seneca).

286-7. *servatum:* ‘qui non potuit febri emori, servatus est ut a Caesare occideretur’ (scholiast). As a matter of fact, Pompey was murdered in Egypt by orders of Ptolemy. See the pathetic lines in *Lucan*, VIII, 771 *sqq.* *victo, Pompeio* (dative).

hoc, hac, both emphatic. Even the three traitors were at least saved such indignity as befel Pompey the ‘Great’, whose headless body was cast out on the seashore. The ancients dreaded mutilation.

289 *sqq.* Cf. Johnson, *Vanity*, 319 *sqq.*

291-2. *usque . . . votorum.* ‘Even to a very daintiness of desire’ (Mayor). ‘Even to a foolish fondness’ (Heinrich quoted by Lewis).

corripias? why chide me?

295. *suam, sc. faciem.* The story of Lucretia is told by Shakespeare in the *Rape of Lucrece*, that of Virginia by Macaulay in his *Lays* (see his introduction to ‘Virginia’).

297-8. *adeo, with rara. horrida:* simple, rugged, old-fashioned. Cf. the words of Lucretius: ‘casta domus luxuque carens’. *tradiderit, taught, bequeathed.* The simplicity of the old Sabine character was proverbial.

303. *cura = safeguard.*

304. i.e. The boy who is endowed with beauty may never grow up to be a true man. An exaggeration, indeed.

305. *improbitas, avulsa, shamelessness.*

312. *publicus, professional.* The ‘lex Julia’ was very severe on this offence.

312-3. *quascunque . . . debet:* this reading is due to Rigault (= vengeance such as he owes to wrathful husbands); but

Munro's conjecture, 'mariti exigere irati est', is attractive. Garrod suggests the following arrangement:—

'et poenas metuet quascunque mariti.
Lex in rete dabit . . .' (cf. xiii, 244).

313-4. An allusion to the story of Mars who was caught in a net prepared by Vulcan, for adultery with Venus (Vulcan's wife). 'He will not be a luckier gallant than Mars, that he should never be trapped' (Mayor).

315. *dolor, resentment*, as in Hor., *Epp.* I, ii. 60 (Obbarius).

324. *quid, &c., how does beauty harm the chaste?* On the principle that πάντα καθαρὰ τοῖς καθαροῖς (*Titus*, i, 15).

immo, nay rather. In most cases 'immo' gives a modified assent, correcting while it affirms; here it contradicts.

325. *grave propositum, stern resolve.* Hippolytus and Bellerophon are the Joseph of ancient legend; Phaedra and Stheneboea the Potiphar's wife. For the story of Hippolytus and Phaedra, see Euripides' fine play (in Murray's version).

326. *haec, Phaedra, the Cretan (Cressa) princess.* Consult the *Class. Dict.*

fastidita, see l. 270. Cf. Congreve, *The Mourning Bride*:

'Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned.'

nempe, cf. l. 110. *repulsa*: a noun (abl. of cause, after 'erubuit').

327-8. *excanduit, took fire (with passion); et se concussere, and shook with rage.*

329-30. *Choose what advice you think ought to be given to him. . . .* The miserable story is told in Tacitus, *Ann.*, XI, 12, 16. Consult J. B. Bury, *History of Roman Empire*, chap. xv, § 4, for a concise account of Messalina and her fall.

333. *miser*, because, whether he yields or refuses, he is destined to meet with a tragic end: see ll. 338-41. The man's name was Silius. Both he and M. were executed.

334. genialis, sc. lectus. *Tyrius*, covered with purple hangings.

335-6. decies centena, about £10,000. *auspex*, to give the mock marriage his blessing; the 'signatores' are the witnesses, who sign the marriage contract: cf. Becker's *Gallus*, p. 163.

338. quid placeat, viz. what your choice is to be.

339-40. velis, erit: admittas dabitur: for the constr. see on 141.

ante lucernas = before lighting-up time, i.e. about half an hour after sundown. *dum, until*.

342. ultimus: Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire*, Vol. VI, chap. 50.

345. *praebenda*: 'praebere' (*παρέχειν*) implying tame submission.

346. Compare Johnson, *Vanity*, 343 to end.

347 *sq.* *permittes*: so Horace, 'permitte divis cetera'. Cf. in the N.T., *Matth.* xxvi, 39; we are reminded also of Menander's words, *μή μοι γένοιθ' ά βούλομ' ἀλλ' ά συμφέρει*, and of the quatrain:

'He knows, He cares, He loves:
Nothing this truth can dim—
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.'

These are the golden words of Xenophon about his master, Socrates: *ηύχετο πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ἀπλῶς τάγαθὰ δίδοναι, ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς μελλιστα εἰδότας ὅποια ἀγαθὰ ἔστιν* (He prayed the gods to grant such things as were absolutely good, believing that the gods had a perfect knowledge of what was best). Cf. too Johnson, *Vanity*, 355-6.

354. et . . . que = *not only, but also*.

355. Note the sarcastic diminutives, 'sacellis', 'candiduli', 'tomacula'.

divina: Plautus (*Pseud.*, II, iii, 37) speaks of 'divina condimenta' = enjoyed by the gods.

358. *qui . . . ponat*: generic subjunctive. Translate: *that reckons mere length of days the smallest of nature's gifts*. But others (among them Dr. Johnson: see *Vanity*, 363-4) take *sp. v. ext.* together as = death.

359. *quoscunque* = *quoslibet* (cf. *utcunque* in l. 271, and xiv, 42, *quocunque sub axe*). But in Cicero 'quicunque' is relative, *ὅτις*. Note the rimes—*labores, potiores, labores*.

360. *nesciat* = *nequeat*. The *ἀπαθελα* of the Stoics.

362. *pluma, the down-cushions*. Sardanapalus (Ashur-bani-pal, King of Assyria) was proverbial for his luxury, like Heliogabalus. He loved splendour and show, but he was anything but a mere voluptuary or a weakling. He held his throne for half a century—no small testimony to the vigour of his rule; and the victories of peace which he won in the fields of culture and administration rivalled, if they did not surpass, the achievement of his armies (*Godspeed, Hist. of Babylonians and Assyrians*). What has made his name famous in our own time is (1) the magnificent library he collected, and (2) the great buildings he erected. His date is seventh century B.C.

364. Compare the closing lines of Milton's *Comus* ('love Virtue; she alone is free').

There is a smack of a copy-book heading about this line of Juvenal's, in which it resembles more than one Stoic maxim. Augustine (in the *Confessions*) has struck a truer note in one immortal sentence: FECISTI NOS, DOMINE, AD TE; ET IRREQUIETUM EST COR NOSTRUM DONEC REQUIESCAT IN TE.

365-6. Practical wisdom is all the divinity we need. It is merely human stupidity that has given Fortune a place among the gods. Clement of Alexandria quotes a line from Philemon: οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν οὐδεμία Τύχη θεός.

*Specimen of Dryden's Translation¹ of the Tenth Satire,
ll. 346 to end:*

What then remains? are we deprived of will?
 Must we not wish, for fear of wishing ill?
 Receive my counsel and securely move,—
 Entrust thy fortune to the Powers above.
 Leave them to manage for thee and to grant
 What their unerring wisdom sees thee want.
 In goodness as in greatness they excel:
 Ah, that we loved ourselves but half so well!
 We, blindly by our head-strong passions led,
 Are hot for action, and desire to wed,
 Then wish for heirs; but to the gods alone
 Our future offspring and our wives are known

Yet, not to rob the priests of pious gain,
 That altars be not wholly built in vain,
 Forgive the gods the rest, and stand confined
 To health of body and content of mind;
 A soul that can securely death defy
 And count it nature's privilege to die;
 Serene and manly, hardened to sustain
 The load of life, and exercised in pain;
 Guiltless of hate and proof against desire;
 That all things weighs and nothing can admire;
 That dares prefer the toils of Hercules
 To dalliance, banquet, and ignoble ease.

The path to peace is Virtue: what I show
 Thyself may freely on thyself bestow.
 Fortune was never worshipped by the wise,
 But, set aloft by fools, usurps the skies.

¹ The date of Dryden's translations from Juvenal (*Satires*, i, vi, x) is 1692. Read his prose essay on Satire, prefixed to the version.

Johnson's The Vanity of Human Wishes

"I at once and for ever recognized in Johnson a man entirely sincere and infallibly wise in the view and estimate he gave of the common questions, business, and ways of the world."—
RUSKIN, *Praeterita*, Vol. I, chap. xii.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The *Vanity of Human Wishes*—an avowed imitation of Juvenal's Tenth Satire—was published in 1749, when Johnson was in his 41st year. It was the year that saw the completion of Gray's ‘Elegy’, in many ways the central poetical achievement of the eighteenth century, as Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, published exactly a hundred years later, was perhaps the central poetical achievement of the nineteenth. Johnson was not even then unknown to fame; his *London* (an imitation of Juvenal's Third Satire) had already won the approbation of Pope; he was already half-way through his *magnum opus*, the *Dictionary*; and his *Life of Savage* had shown discerning critics that its author was one to be reckoned with in the world of letters. The days of his greatest triumphs were still to come. Yet, as Professor Saintsbury has remarked, sooner or later in thinking about Johnson, we always come or return to *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, for there, and specially in the “magnificent descent” at its close, Johnson declares his ethical creed. He was, says Courthope,¹ in deep sympathy with Juvenal's view of life, “but his object was to bring out his moral by modern examples and a completely Christian mood of feeling”. ‘Christian’:

¹ *History of English Poetry*, Vol. V.

yes, perhaps, but so blended with Stoicism as to sound a note of grave melancholy, not merely in this poem but in his prose (notably *Rasselas*). "Infelicity", he said in his *Rambler*, "is involved in corporeal nature and interwoven with our being. The cure for the greatest part of human miseries is not radical but palliative." Maxims such as these form the subject-matter of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, "in which Johnson gives classical and memorable expression to some of his profoundest convictions".¹ Though entirely convinced of the truth of Christianity, he seldom dilates on the grandeur of its hopes and fears. "What he keeps principally in view is the beneficial effect of religious belief on human conduct, laying down the law in sonorous dogmas."²

Johnson's style is frequently clumsy and his diction over-elaborated, but it is always vigorous. His love of antithesis and 'inversions' sometimes makes his language difficult; but the thought he is trying to express is consecutive, masculine, and clear. "If you test his criticism", writes Sir A. Quiller-Couch,³ "he never saw literature but as a part of life, nor would he allow in literature what was false in life, as he saw it." That is why he lives; and all Boswell testifies to this. Johnson carried with him the 'aura' of greatness. *Si documentum requiris, circumspice.*

¹ Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson*.

² Professor Minto, *English Prose Literature*.

³ *On the Art of Writing*.

THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES

Let Observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru;
Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife,
And watch the busy scenes of crowded life;
Then say, how hope and fear, desire and hate, 5
O'erspread with snares the clouded maze of fate,
Where wavering man, betray'd with vent'rous pride
To tread the dreary paths without a guide,
As treacherous phantoms in the mist delude,
Shuns fancied ills, or chases airy good; 10
How rarely reason guides the stubborn choice,
Rules the bold hand, or prompts the suppliant voice;
How nations sink, by darling schemes oppress'd,
When Vengeance listens to the fool's request.
Fate wings with every wish th' afflictive dart, 15
Each gift of nature, and each grace of art;
With fatal heat impetuous courage glows,
With fatal sweetness elocution flows;
Impeachment stops the speaker's powerful breath,
And restless fire precipitates on death. 20

But, scarce observed, the knowing and the bold

Fall in the general massacre of gold;
 Wide-wasting pest! that rages unconfined,
 And crowds with crime the records of mankind;
 For gold his sword the hireling ruffian draws, 25
 For gold the hireling judge distorts the laws;
 Wealth heap'd on wealth nor truth nor safety buys,
 The dangers gather as the treasures rise.

Let History tell where rival kings command,
 And dubious title shakes the madded land, 30
 When statutes glean the refuse of the sword,
 How much more safe the vassal than the lord;
 Low skulks the hind beneath the rage of power,
 And leaves the wealthy traitor in the Tower;
 Untouch'd his cottage, and his slumbers sound, 35
 Though Confiscation's vultures hover round.

The needy traveller, serene and gay,
 Walks the wild heath, and sings his toil away.
 Does envy seize thee? crush th' upbraiding joy;
 Increase his riches, and his peace destroy. 40
 Now fears in dire vicissitude invade,
 The rustling brake alarms, and quivering shade;
 Nor light nor darkness bring his pain relief:
 One shows the plunder, and one hides the thief.

Yet still one general cry the skies assails,
 And gain and grandeur load the tainted gales;
 Few know the toiling statesman's fear or care,
 Th' insidious rival and the gaping heir. 45

Once more, Democritus, arise on earth,
 With cheerful wisdom and instructive mirth;
 See motley life in modern trappings dress'd, 50

And feed with varied fools th' eternal jest.

Thou who could'st laugh where want enchain'd caprice,
Toil crush'd conceit, and man was of a piece;

Where wealth, unloved, without a mourner died; 55

And scarce a sycophant was fed by pride;

Where ne'er was known the form of mock debate,
Or seen a new-made mayor's unwieldy state;

Where change of favourites made no change of laws,
And senates heard before they judged a cause; 60

How wouldst thou shake at Britain's modish tribe,
Dart the quick taunt, and edge the piercing gibe,

Attentive truth and nature to descry,

And pierce each scene with philosophic eye!

To thee were solemn toys, or empty show, 65

The robes of pleasure and the veils of woe:

All aid the farce, and all thy mirth maintain,

Whose joys are causeless, and whose griefs are vain.

Such was the scorn that fill'd the sage's mind,

Renew'd at every glance on human kind; 70

How just that scorn ere yet thy voice declare,

Search every state, and canvass every prayer.

Unnumber'd suppliants crowd Preferment's gate,

Athirst for wealth, and burning to be great;

Delusive Fortune hears th' incessant call: 75

They mount, they shine, evaporate, and fall.

On every stage the foes of peace attend,

Hate dogs their flight, and insult mocks their end.

Love ends with hope, the sinking statesman's door

Pours in the morning worshipper no more; 80

For growing names the weekly scribbler lies,

To growing wealth the dedicator flies,
 From every room descends the painted face,
 That hung—the bright palladium of the place;
 And, smoked in kitchens, or in auctions sold,
 To better features yields the frame of gold; 85
 For now no more we trace in every line
 Heroic worth, benevolence divine:
 The form distorted justifies the fall,
 And detestation rids th' indignant wall. 90

But will not Britain hear the last appeal,
 Sign her foes' doom, or guard her favourites' zeal?
 Through Freedom's sons no more remonstrance rings,
 Degrading nobles, and controlling kings;
 Our supple tribes repress their patriot throats, 95
 And ask no questions but the price of votes;
 With weekly libels and septennial ale,
 Their wish is full—to riot and to rail.

In full-blown dignity see Wolsey stand,
 Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand: 100
 To him the church, the realm, their powers consign,
 Through him the rays of regal bounty shine,
 Turn'd by his nod the stream of honour flows,
 His smile alone security bestows.

Still to new heights his restless wishes tower,
 Claim leads to claim, and power advances power; 105
 Till conquest unresisted ceased to please,
 And rights submitted left him none to seize.
 At length his sovereign frowns—the train of state
 Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate. 110
 Where'er he turns, he meets a stranger's eye,

His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly;
 Now drops at once the pride of awful state,
 The golden canopy, the glittering plate,
 The regal palace, the luxurious board,
 The liveried army, and the menial lord.

115

With age, with cares, with maladies oppress'd,
 He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.
 Grief aids disease, remember'd folly stings,
 And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings.

120

Speak thou, whose thoughts at humble peace repine,
 Shall Wolsey's wealth, with Wolsey's end, be thine?
 Or livest thou now, with safer pride content,
 The wisest justice on the banks of Trent?
 For why did Wolsey, near the steeps of fate,
 On weak foundations raise th' enormous weight?
 Why, but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,
 With louder ruin to the gulphs below?

125

What gave great Villiers to th' assassin's knife,
 And fix'd disease on Harley's closing life?
 What murder'd Wentworth, and what exiled Hyde,
 By kings protected, and to kings allied?
 What but their wish indulged in courts to shine,
 And power too great to keep, or to resign?

130

When first the college rolls receive his name,
 The young enthusiast quits his ease for fame;
 Resistless burns the fever of renown,
 Caught from the strong contagion of the gown;¹

135

¹ The couplet appears in a later edition of the poem thus:—

'Thro' all his veins the fever of renown
 Burns from the strong contagion of the gown'.

O'er Bodley's dome his future labours spread,
And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head.

140

Are these thy views? Proceed, illustrious youth,
And Virtue guard thee to the throne of Truth!

Yet, should thy soul indulge the generous heat
Till captive Science yields her last retreat;

145

Should Reason guide thee with her brightest ray,
And pour on misty Doubt resistless day;
Should no false kindness lure to loose delight,
Nor praise relax, nor difficulty fright;

Should tempting Novelty thy cell refrain,
And Sloth effuse her opiate fumes in vain;

150

Should Beauty blunt on fops her fatal dart,
Nor claim the triumph of a letter'd heart;
Should no disease thy torpid veins invade,
Nor Melancholy's phantoms haunt thy shade,

Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
Nor think the doom of man reversed for thee.

155

Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause awhile from Letters, to be wise;

There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the gaol.

160

See nations, slowly wise, and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.

If dreams yet flatter, once again attend,
Hear Lydiat's life, and Galileo's end.

Nor deem, when Learning her last prize bestows,
The glitt'ring eminence exempt from foes;
See, when the vulgar 'scape, despised or awed,
Rebellion's vengeful talons seize on Laud.

165

For meaner minds though smaller fines content,
The plunder'd palace, or sequester'd rent; 170
Mark'd out by dangerous parts, he meets the shock,
And fatal Learning leads him to the block:
Around his tomb let Art and Genius weep,
But hear his death, ye blockheads, hear and sleep.

The festal blazes, the triumphal show, 175
The ravish'd standard, and the captive foe,
The senate's thanks, the Gazette's pompous tale,
With force resistless o'er the brave prevail.
Such bribes the rapid Greek o'er Asia whirl'd,
For such the steady Romans shook the world; 180
For such in distant lands the Britons shine;
And stain with blood the Danube or the Rhine;
This power has praise that virtue scarce can warm,
Till fame supplies the universal charm.
Yet Reason frowns on War's unequal game, 185
Where wasted nations raise a single name;
And mortgaged states their grandsires' wreaths regret,
From age to age in everlasting debt;
Wreaths which at last the dear-bought right convey,
To rust on medals, or on stones decay. 190

On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide;
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain, 195
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;

Behold surrounding kings their power combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign; 200
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;
“Think nothing gain’d,” he cries, “till nought remain,
On Moscow’s walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the polar sky.”
The march begins in military state, 205
And nations on his eye suspended wait;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
And Winter barricades the realm of Frost;
He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay;
Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa’s day! 210
The vanquish’d hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands;
Condemn’d a needy suppliant to wait,
While ladies interpose and slaves debate.
But did not Chance at length her error mend? 215
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress, and a dubious hand; 220
He left the name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale.
All times their scenes of pompous woes afford,
From Persia’s tyrant to Bavaria’s lord.
In gay hostility and barbarous pride, 225
With half mankind embattled at his side,
Great Xerxes comes to seize the certain prey,
And starves exhausted regions in his way;

Attendant Flattery counts his myriads o'er,
 Till counted myriads soothe his pride no more; 230
 Fresh praise is try'd till madness fires his mind,
 The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind;
 New powers are claim'd, new powers are still bestow'd,
 Till rude Resistance lops the spreading god.

The daring Greeks deride the martial show, 235
 And heap their valleys with the gaudy foe;
 Th' insulted sea with humbler thoughts he gains,
 A single skiff to speed his flight remains;
 The incumbered oar scarce leaves the dreaded coast,
 Through purple billows and a floating host. 240

The bold Bavarian, in a luckless hour,
 Tries the dread summits of Cæsarian power,
 With unexpected legions bursts away,
 And sees defenceless realms receive his sway. 244
 Short sway! fair Austria spreads her mournful charms,
 The queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms;
 From hill to hill the beacon's rousing blaze
 Spreads wide the hope of plunder and of praise;
 The fierce Croatian and the wild Hussar,
 With all the sons of ravage, crowd the war; 250
 The baffled prince, in honour's flattering bloom
 Of hasty greatness, finds the fatal doom;
 His foes' derision and his subjects' blame,
 And steals to death from anguish and from shame.

‘Enlarge my life with multitude of days!’ 255
 In health, in sickness, thus the suppliant prays:
 Hides from himself his state, and shuns to know
 That life protracted is protracted woe.

Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,
And shuts up all the passages of joy: 260
In vain their gifts the bounteous seasons pour,
The fruit autumnal, and the vernal flower;
With listless eyes the dotard views the store,
He views, and wonders that they please no more:
Now pall the tasteless meats and joyless wines, 265
And Luxury with sighs her slave resigns.
Approach, ye minstrels, try the soothing strain,
Diffuse the tuneful lenitives of pain:
No sounds, alas! would touch th' impervious ear,
Though dancing mountains witness'd Orpheus near; 270
Nor lute nor lyre his feeble powers attend,
Nor sweeter music of a virtuous friend;
But everlasting dictates crowd his tongue,
Perversely grave, or positively wrong.
The still returning tale, and lingering jest, 275
Perplex the fawning niece and pamper'd guest,
While growing hopes scarce awe the gathering sneer,
And scarce a legacy can bribe to hear;
The watchful guests still hint the last offence,—
The daughter's petulance, the son's expense; 280
Improve his heady rage with treach'rous skill,
And mould his passions till they make his will.
Unnumber'd maladies his joints invade,
Lay siege to life, and press the dire blockade;
But unextinguish'd Avarice still remains,
And dreaded losses aggravate his pains;
He turns, with anxious heart and crippled hands,
His bonds of debt and mortgages of lands;

Or views his coffers with suspicious eyes,
Unlocks his gold, and counts it till he dies. 290

But grant, the virtues of a temperate prime
Bless with an age exempt from scorn or crime;
An age that melts in unperceived decay,
And glides in modest innocence away;
Whose peaceful day Benevolence endears,
Whose night congratulating Conscience cheers; 295
The general favourite as the general friend:
Such age there is, and who shall wish its end?

Yet even on this her load Misfortune flings,
To press the weary minutes' flagging wings;
New sorrow rises as the day returns,
A sister sickens, or a daughter mourns.
Now kindred Merit fills the sable bier,
Now lacerated Friendship claims a tear;
Year chases year, decay pursues decay, 305
Still drops some joy from withering life away;
New forms arise, and different views engage,
Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage,
Till pitying Nature signs the last release,
And bids afflicted worth retire to peace. 310

But few there are whom hours like these await,
Who set unclouded in the gulphs of Fate.
From Lydia's monarch should the search descend,
By Solon caution'd to regard his end,
In life's last scene what prodigies surprise,
Fears of the brave, and follies of the wise! 315
From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driveller and a show.

The teeming mother, anxious for her race,
Begs for each birth the fortune of a face ;
Yet Vane could tell what ills from beauty spring ;
And Sedley cursed the form that pleased a king.
Ye nymphs of rosy lips and radiant eyes,
Whom Pleasure keeps too busy to be wise ;
Whom joys with soft varieties invite,
By day the frolic, and the dance by night ;
Who frown with vanity, who smile with art,
And ask the latent fashion of the heart ;
What care, what rules, your heedless charms shall save,
Each nymph your rival, and each youth your slave ?
Against your fame with fondness hate combines,
The rival batters, and the lover mines.
With distant voice neglected Virtue calls,
Less heard, and less, the faint remonstrance falls ;
Tired with contempt, she quits the slippery reign,
And Pride and Prudence take her seat in vain.
In crowd at once, where none the pass defend,
The harmless freedom, and the private friend.
The guardians yield, by force superior plied,
To Interest, Prudence ; and to Flattery, Pride.
Here Beauty falls betray'd, despised, distress'd,
And hissing Infamy proclaims the rest.

Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find?
Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies? 345

Enquirer, cease; petitions yet remain
Which Heaven may hear: nor deem Religion vain. 350
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice.
Safe in His power, whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious prayer;
Implore His aid, in His decisions rest, 355
Secure, whate'er He gives, He gives the best.
Yet, when the sense of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions and a will resign'd; 360
For love, which scarce collective man can fill;
For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
For faith, that, panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat.
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain, 365
These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain;
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

NOTES

1, 2. An unfortunate beginning; it is almost as if he had said 'Let observation, with extensive observation, observe'. Cf. the opening lines of *Juvenal*, x.

6. Man is pictured wandering through a labyrinth, clouded over with mist and beset with pitfalls. His own perverse will makes the way all the more hard.

7. **vent'rous** = *adventurous*. An awkward contraction.

13. **darling schemes**, such as the South Sea Bubble.

14. **the fool's request**, i.e. for wealth.

18. Johnson may have had Cicero and Demosthenes in mind.

20. **precipitates**, used here intransitively.

22. **massacre of gold**: does this mean 'the plunder of the wealthy'? or 'the general ravages of (= caused by) gold'?

29-36. The descent of the Young Pretender in 1745.

31. **refuse of the sword**, what the sword has left. Acts of Attainder were passed against those who had joined in the rising; some were imprisoned in the Tower, some executed.

37-8. Cf. *Juvenal*, x, 22.

39-40 = 'Crush the happiness of him whose prosperity causes you to upbraid Providence, by increasing his riches and so destroying his peace' (Courthope, *A History of English Poetry*, Vol. V, 208).

46. **tainted**, predicative = so that they become, as it were, tainted.

48. heir, said to refer to Frederick, Prince of Wales, the disloyal son of George II.

49. Democritus of Abdera: see *Juvenal*, 33-5.

52. A difficult line, which I take to mean, 'and [see] the eternal jest lavishly paid for by fools'. A low comedian will get £100 for one night's entertainment of the vulgar; a Milton will get £10 for writing *Paradise Lost*.

53. where want, i.e. in Abdera, a small provincial town.

54. man was of a piece, all men were more or less alike poor.

57. mock debate, in Parliament. But the debates in Hellenic Assemblies were often just as full of humbug as debates often are to-day.

58. The Lord Mayor's Show.

60. To judge a cause before hearing it is the mockery of debate (l. 57).

61. modish, à la mode, *fashionable*.

65-6. If the two lines are inverted the construction is clear. Johnson has a love for 'inversions', contrary though these not unseldom are to the genius of our language.

72. canvass, sift; to examine an object by passing it through *canvas* or a sieve. state, state of life.

79. Alluding to the fall of Walpole: see Macaulay's Essay on this statesman.

80. Cf. Virgil's line: 'mane salutantum totis vomit aedibus undam'.

82. The eighteenth century was an age of flattering 'dedications'.

84. palladium, *safeguard*. The 'palladium' was the image of Pallas on which the safety of Troy depended. See *Class. Dict.*

90. indignant: a similar use of the word occurs in the passage from Milton, quoted in *n.* on 225 infr. For a modern example, we may remember what happened at a well-known

London Club, during the war, to the portrait of a certain politician : it was relegated to the cellar.

95. **supple tribes**: the allusion to Roman republican history is obvious.

97. **libels**, a sarcastic reference to weekly journals and newspapers. The Septennial Act was passed in 1716. Since the Great War new Parliaments have to be elected every *five* years.

98. **full** = fulfilled.

100. For an account of Wolsey, see Froude, *Hist. of England*, Vol. I; and, for his fall, Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, Act iii, Sc. 2.

118. **monastic rest**, Leicester Abbey: 1530.

127-8. For the sentiment, cf. Horace, *Odes*, II, x, 9: 'Saepius ventis agitatur ingens Pinus ; et celsae graviore casu Decidunt turres ; feriuntque summos Fulgura montes '.

129 *sqq.* Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, assassinated 1628; Harley, created Earl of Oxford, died 1724; Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, sent to the block in 1641 (see Browning's play, *Strafford*) ; Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, banished in 1667. He is famous for his *History of the Great Rebellion*.

132. **protected**: Charles I proved but a broken reed as far as the ill-fated Strafford was concerned. **allied**: Lord Clarendon's daughter became the wife of James II.

133. **wish indulged**, viz. the indulging of a wish to shine in courts.

135-165. In the original, the subject-matter of this paragraph is the vanity of the fame of eloquence (examples—Demosthenes and Cicero). Johnson has allowed his own feelings and character to colour his description; an intense personal experience is revealed in l. 160. The whole picture here is autobiographical.

139. **Bodley's dome**, the Oxford University Library. Bodley (died 1612) left his property to support and extend this great collection of books.

140. **Bacon's mansion:** 'there is a tradition that the study of Friar Bacon, built on an arch over the bridge, will fall when a greater man than Bacon shall pass under it. To prevent so shocking an accident, it was pulled down many years since' (note by Dr. Johnson).

144. **Science = knowledge** (in its widest sense).

149. **refrain**, keep away from.

153-4. Johnson was afflicted, from earliest days, with scrofula. He was constitutionally a melancholy man (we can see this if we read *Rasselas*), but his melancholy was neither touched with misanthropy nor soured by rebellion; he hopes for little in this world, 'but never whines nor rages nor attempts to jest the matter off' (Saintsbury, *The Peace of the Augustans*, Chap. IV).

160. **patron.** In the first edition, Johnson wrote 'garret' for 'patron'. Read Johnson's famous letter to the Earl of Chesterfield (given in Boswell). **jail:** he had himself been arrested for debt.

161-2. Cf. *Luke xi, 47.* Probably Johnson is alluding to Butler (author of *Hudibras*), who died in poverty, only to have a barren memorial raised to him long after his death.

164. **Lydiat**, a man of great learning, died, as he had lived, in indigence (1646). Four years before, Galileo, blind and distressed, had died a prey to wasting disease.

168. **Laud**, Archbishop of Canterbury (the 'glittering eminence'), was brought to the block in 1641, a victim to the hate and fanaticism of religious sectaries. See Gladstone's *Romanes Lecture* (1892); Wakeman's *History of the Church of England*, 362-73; and Bright, *Waymarks in Church History*.

177. **Gazette:** the accent here is on the first syllable.

179. **Greek**, Alexander the Great.

181. The allusion is to the campaigns in Germany (Dettingen, Fontenoy) from 1742-7.

183-4. The sense is: 'Praise has so much power that, without the universal stimulus of Fame, men will scarcely be roused to virtuous action' (Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, Vol. V, p. 208). Inversion and ellipse have produced a certain obscurity here.

185. Thanks to 'war's unequal game' the National Debt to-day is something like £8,000,000,000! In Johnson's day it stood at £80,000,000. The single name is that of Marlborough.

191 *sqq.* Charles XII of Sweden exemplified for Johnson the vanity of military fame, as Hannibal did for Juvenal. See Voltaire's *Life of Charles XII*.

196. Charles possessed the Stoic virtue of *αὐτάρκεια* (self-control)—'une âme hardie et inébranlable'.

199. The kings of Denmark, Poland, and Russia. Denmark 'capitulated', Poland 'resigned'.

202. Johnson is thinking of the oft-quoted line of *Lucan* (ii, 657) :—

'Nil actum credens, dum quid superesset agendum'.

203. Gothic, i.e. Swedish.

209. delay: the plural is grammatically inaccurate.

210. Charles was defeated at Pultowa in 1709, the year of Johnson's birth.

213. One thinks of Hannibal at the court of Prusias. Charles had fled to Turkey.

220. fortress, on the Norwegian coast: this was in 1718. No one has ever known whether he was struck down by an enemy or by one of his own people ('a dubious hand').

224. Persia's tyrant, Xerxes; Bavaria's lord, Charles Albert, who laid claim to the imperial crown.

225 *sqq.* The story of the famous expedition against Greece is told with great verve in *Herodotus*, vii, viii. With 1. 232

compare *Juvenal*, 179 *sqq.*, and the line in Milton, *P. L.*, x, 307-11:

'Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
Came to the sea, and, over Hellespont
Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined
And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves'.

233. Alluding to the demands made by Xerxes on the Thessalian cities, which in many cases submitted. Athens put up a 'rude resistance', as did Sparta at Thermopylæ.

234. god: Xerxes claimed semi-divine powers.

240. floating host, of dead Persians, after the sea-fight at Salamis.

241-4. The War of the Austrian Succession.

245. fair Austria, Maria Theresa. She made a great appeal to her people at the Diet of Pressburg, 1741. They rose, as one man, to defend her crown.

249. Hussar, Hungary's light cavalry.

254. Charles died, broken hearted, four years later.

255. Cf. the passage in *Juvenal*, 188 *sqq.*

260. passages of joy, the senses. Age takes away our capacity for pleasure.

270. Cf. the Elizabethan lyric beginning:

'Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain-tops that freeze,
Bow themselves when he did sing'.

271. attend, *hear*. The object of the verb is 'nor lute nor lyre'.

274. positively, *dogmatically*. He is like a worse Polonius.

275. The old man is now in his 'anecdoteage'.

281. improve = increase.

293-4. Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, 107-10:—

But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While Resignation gently slopes the way'.

300. **press**, press down, so *retard*.

312. Cf. the magnificent passage in Burke's *Speech on American Taxation*: 'Even then, before this splendid orb [viz. Chatham] was entirely set, and while the western horizon was in a blaze with his descended glory'.

313. monarch, Croesus. **descend**, viz. come down to our own times.

314. '*Respicere finem.*' Σκοπέειν δὲ χρὴ τὴν τελευτήν: *Herodotus*, I, 32.

317. Marlborough died, a physical wreck, in 1722, aged 73; Swift, in 1745, a mental wreck. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* See Johnson's *Life of Swift*.

319 *sqq.* Cf. *Juvenal*, 289 *sqq.*

321. Vane, Lady Vane, mistress of Frederick Prince of Wales—and others.

322. Sedley, one of the mistresses of James II. Macaulay, *History of England*, chap. vi.

334. **falls**, on the ear.

343 *sqq.* *Juvenal*, 346 *sqq.* "These lines of Johnson are noble in expression as well as lofty and tender in feeling. Johnson, like Wordsworth, had felt all the 'heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world'; and, though he stumbles a little in the narrow limits of his versification, he bears himself nobly, and manages to put his heart into his poetry" (Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*).

345. Cf. Gray's lines: 'Enough! where ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise'.

346. **darkling**, properly an adverb, but often used (as here) for 'in the dark'. Milton, *P. L.*, iii, 39, 'The wakeful bird sings darkling'; Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale*, 'darkling I listen'.

354. Viz. 'the ills that lie hid behind an apparently reasonable prayer' (Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, Vol. V, 208).

361. **collective man** (mankind) is the object of 'fill'.

362. **transmuted**, with predicative force (=so that it becomes transmuted in the process).

368. Cf. Johnson's lines added to Goldsmith's *Traveller*:

'Still to ourselves in every place consigned
Our own felicity we make or find'.

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JUVENAL'S TENTH SATIRE & JOHNSON'S THE V



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